

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 116163

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ORIGIN AF-04

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ABIDJAN 4282 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BRUSSELS
CASABLANCA COTONOU DAKAR LAGOS LIBREVILLE 31 MAY

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ABIDJAN 4282

BRUSSELS AND LAGOS FOR FAA

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRN, IV

SUBJ: AIR AFRIQUE AND PANAM

1. LOUIS BERMAN, PANAM REPRESENTATIVE, INFORMED EMBASSY
THAT AIR AFRIQUE IS CONTINUING TO PRESSURE PANAM TO REDUCE
FREQUENCY OF ITS FLIGHTS TO WEST AFRICA (SEE REFTEL). ACCORDING
TO BERMAN, AIR AFRIQUE IS LOSING MONEY ON ITS WEST AFRICA - NEW
YORK FLIGHTS, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF PANAM COMPETITION. SINCE
CESSATION OF FLIGHTS TO NEW YORK WOULD BE UNDESIRABLE FOR POLITICAL
REASONS, AIR AFRIQUE WOULD PREFER TO SEE REDUCTION IN PANAM
COMPETITION.

2. BERMAN STATED PANAM OPERATION TO WEST AFRICA IS
PROFITABLE; THEREFORE, ON STRICTLY ECONOMIC GROUND PANAM WOULD
BE RELUCTANT TO REDUCE FLIGHT FREQUENCY. HOWEVER, AIR AFRIQUE
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PAGE 02 STATE 116163

HOLD POLITICAL TRUMP CARD SINCE IT COULD EXERT PRESSURE ON ITS

MEMBER STATES TO DENY FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHTS TO PANAM WHICH PRESENTLY DOES NOT HAVE BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH ANY OF THESE COUNTRIES. ACCORDING TO BERMAN, IF FIFTH FREEDOM RIGHTS ELIMINATED, PANAM WEST AFRICAN OPERATION WOULD NO LONGER BE PROFITABLE. THUS, FOR TIME BEING, PANAM HAS TOLD AIR AFRIQUE THAT DISCUSSIONS OF FREQUENCY REDUCTION REQUEST SHOULD BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER CONCLUSION OF PANAM/TWA POLLING ARRANGEMENTS ON NORTH ATLANTIC FLIGHTS. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF RENEWING BLOCKED SPACE AGREEMENT WITH AIR AFRIQUE.
SMWTH UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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